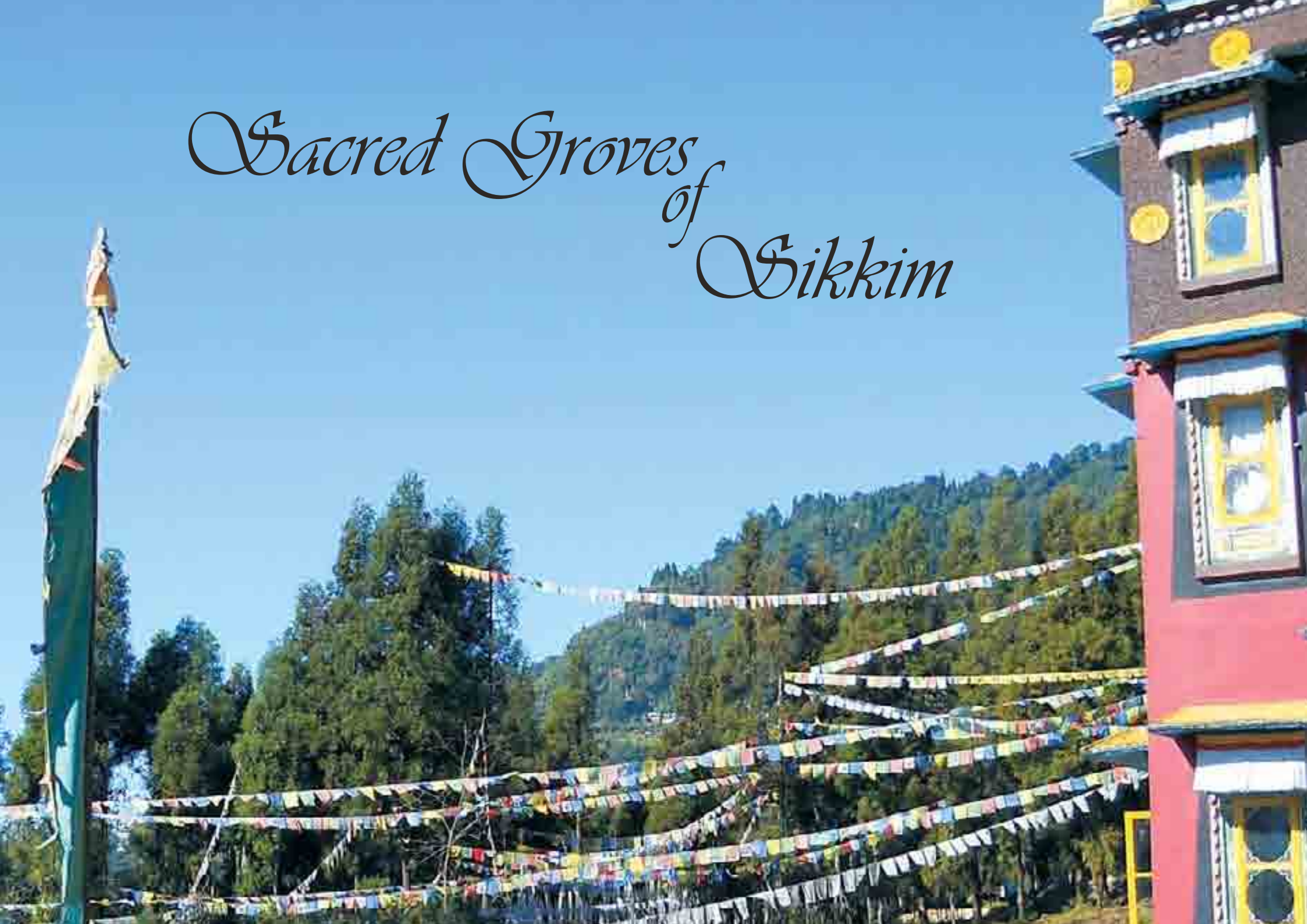
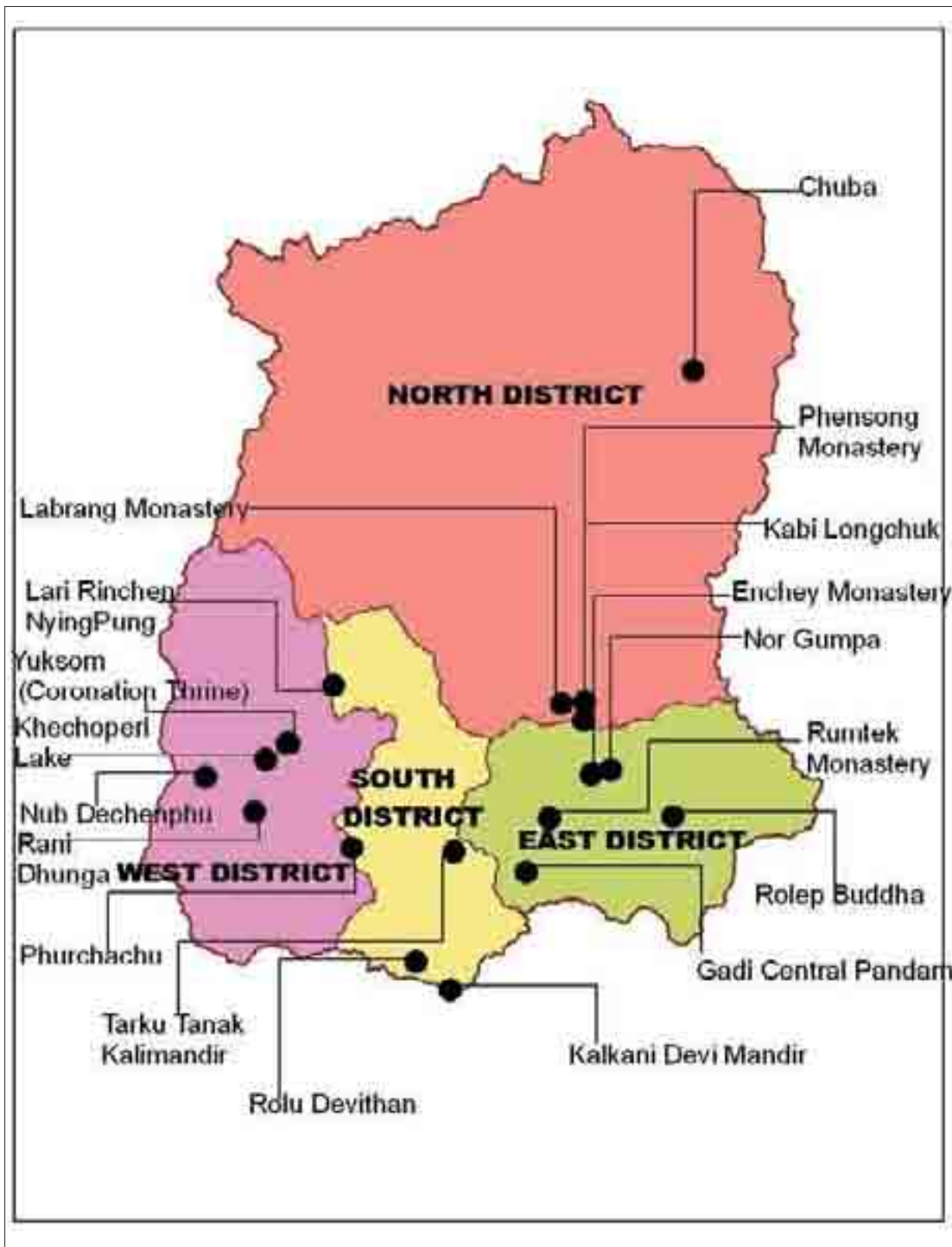


*Sacred Groves
of
Sikkim*





Introduction

Like many countries throughout the world, India has a long history of nature worship, and that practice continues today, especially through the veneration of forest groves. These sacred groves, which are dedicated to local deities or ancestral spirits, are protected by local communities through social traditions and taboos that incorporate spiritual and ecological values. Preserved over the course of many generations, sacred groves represent native vegetation in a natural or near-natural state and thus are rich in biodiversity and harbor many rare species of plants and animals. The forces of the modern world are depleting sacred groves and weakening the traditions that protect them. Fortunately, thousands of sacred groves remain and many villages continue to observe traditional practices. Moreover, in the face of degradation, conservationists are recognizing that traditional knowledge and sacred practice are important elements in the conservation and management of these ecological treasures. According to a member of the Bishnois of Rajasthan, a tribe with a conservation-based religious faith so strong that some have sacrificed their lives to save sacred trees: “*Any change in the world has to begin within the society*”. All this talk about nature and wildlife protection would be more effective if each individual was to believe in the earth as a living, breathing entity and fight for its survival the way we do”. In situ conservation of biodiversity has been possible in many ways and has withstood the test of time. “Sacred groves” can be placed in this category.

Sikkim, one of the smallest state of the country with a total geographical area of 7096 km² also harbors some such sacred areas with religious and/or historical background. There are sacred groves reported in all part of the state . All the sacred groves are attached to the local monasteries (Gumpas), dedicated to the deities and managed by the Gumpa authority or Lamas, or often by the village community. Out of many sacred groves found in Sikkim only 19 numbers of sacred groves are presented here

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CHUBA



BACKGROUND

“Chuba” means land between two rivers. Here a local deity/Guardian by the name Cho Chuba is worshipped. Legend has it that on Buddhist auspicious nights of full moon, Cho Chuba's horses can be heard galloping along with the sounds of Radong and Gyaling being played from adjoining hills. For the people of Lachung this grove is revered and worshipped twice a year, once on the first day of Losar(Tibetan New Year) and six months after. Because of its significance no person cuts trees or hunts in and around that area as it is believed that if any person does so, bad luck descends over the entire village.

VEGETATION

The grove area consist of tree species like Kapasey, Asare, Lali Guras, Silver fir, *Picea smithiana*, and *Tsuga dumosa*.

The under growth consist of Argeli, Halhalay, Dubo, jungle Sag, etc. and herbs like Ratnawlo, Banso, Gagletto, Harkata, etc.

LOCATION

Located on Lachung-Dombang Road in North Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N27°48'42” and Longitude E 88°45'15.2” at an elevation of 3010 meters.



DUBDI MONASTERY



the 17th century by Lhetsum Chenpo and his two associate lamas. Chenpo's green image is enshrined in the Dubdi monastery as it was established by him to commemorate the founding of the Kingdom of Sikkim. It is the only monastery (purported now as the first monastery built in Sikkim) surviving out of the four built at that time, the other three locations are now identified by a cluster of four Juniper trees where a monastery of Khardokpa sect existed, another location of a monastery established by Lama of Nadakpa sect now seen in the form of a rocky mound and two juniper trees, and the third site now having a chorten, which was originally the location of the residence of the King of Sikkim who was crowned at Yuksom by the three lamas.

LOCATION

Located 4 km (approx.) uphill from Yuksom town in West Sikkim. Situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 22' 12.3" and Longitude E 88°12'59.8" at an elevation of 1938 meters.



BACKGROUND

Occasionally called Yuksom Monastery is a Buddhist monastery of the Nyingma sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Dubdi monastery is central to the history of Sikkim as it is closely linked to the founding of the State of Sikkim at Yuksom in the middle of



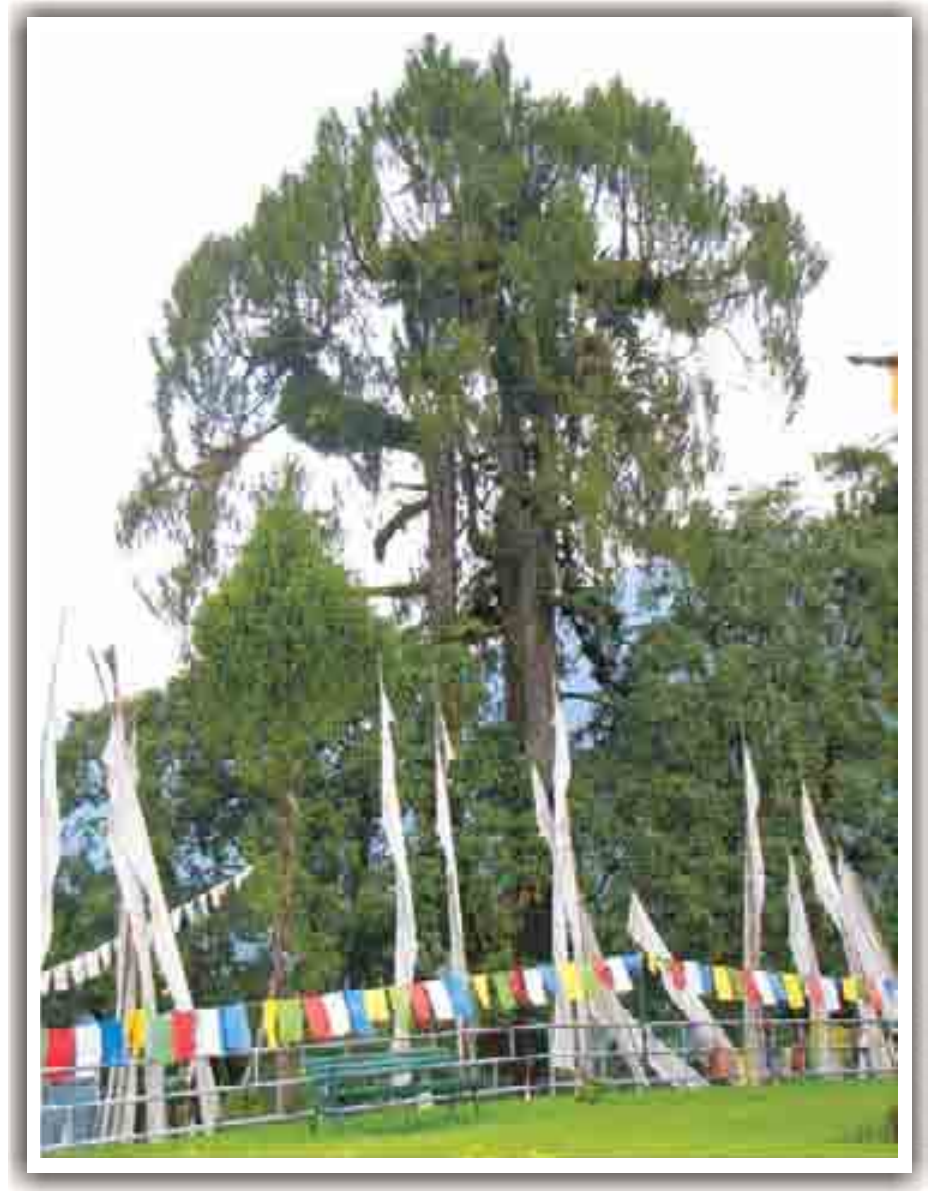
VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The grove of 1.73 acres in Gumpa land hosts tree species like Cupressus, Silver, Oak, Kawla, Tooni, Katus and Phaledo.

Herbs like Kalo Banso and Kalo Kibu etc. and shrubs namely Asare, Argeli, Kesari, Basak, etc. and climbers like Charcharey lahara, Majito and Chabo are present in the area.



Machilus edulis fruiting



A Large Cupressus Tree

ENCHEY MONASTRY



LOCATION

Located 4 km from Gangtok town, East Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27°20' 08.8" and Longitude E 88° 37' 09.3" at an elevation of 1874 meters.



BACKGROUND

The monastery was first built in the 1840 by the eighth Chogyal and as a result, Gangtok then a small

hamlet became a pilgrimage place. However, the monastery as seen now was aesthetically built in 1909, like a Chinese Pagoda during the rule of Sidkeong Tulku (1909-1910). It was built at the exact location where Lama Druptub Karbo had his hermitage. The monastery is topped by a shining golden cupola. It houses a number of images of Gods, Goddesses and religious objects. The deities worshiped in the monastery are the Buddha, Loki Sharia and Guru Padmasambhava. The walls of the monastery in the large prayer hall are fully covered with paintings and murals of four religious kings, the deities of the four cardinal directions as stated in the scriptures and the entire galaxy of Mahayan Buddhist deities. Manuscripts of scriptures are kept in an almirah. The four pillars supporting the roof of the monastery are elaborately carved. Built under the Nyingma order, it houses around 90 monks. The windows of the monastery are very ornately carved and painted. The monastery has a large collection of masks which are used for the annual ritual dances. As its name implies, monastery has a peaceful atmosphere and also maintains a good library. A very serene atmosphere has been created with the colourful prayer flags fluttering around the monastery. Like all other Nyingmapa monasteries in Sikkim, this monastery is also under the jurisdiction of the Pemayangtse Monastery. The monastery was gutted in 1947. However, it was rebuilt in 1948 with the support of the devotees.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The grove of approximately 4 acres in and around Gumpa land is mainly dominated by Dhupi trees; other species of trees found are Kawla, Tooni, Phaledo, Okhar, Phusrey Champ, Dhupi (Pine spp.), Sinkoli, Bohori, Uttis, Cupressus, etc.

The under growth of the grove consists of shrubs like Thotnay, Asare, Ghurpis, Aiselu, Tusare, etc.



Palm tree- A rare sight

GADI CENTRAL PANDAM



Namgyal in the year 1717 AD to resist the invasion of Bhutanes army. During one of the invasions by Bhutanes army the princess Pendi Ongmu took shelter here and so the name Pandam derived from the name of the princess Pendi. The fort is 1000 foot long and 100 foot in height and spreads over an area of 5 acres.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The Khasmal area of the grove is dense and the top canopy consists of tree species like Mauwa, Kawla, Angeri, Kharaney, Phusrey Chap, Lek Kharaney, Chilouney, Arkaulo , Phaledo etc.

The ground cover consists of shrubs like Ghurpis, Chulasi, Algeri, Dhokray phool, etc and herbs like Kibu, Kuro, Harkata, Manay, Chipley, Das paisa jhar etc.

LOCATION

Located 16km(approx) from Rangpo town situated approximately at Latitude N 27°13'14.2"and Longitude E 88° 31'59.6" at an elevation of 1874 meters .



BACKGROUND

The Gadi or locally known as Budang gadi is the ruins of fort built by the monarch of Sikkim , the then Chogyal Chador



KABI - LONGCHUK



LOCATION

Located on Gangtok - Kabi highway in North Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27°23'54.3" and Longitude E 88° 36'34.5" at an elevation of 1646 meters.



BACKGROUND

Against an interesting Lepcha religious folklore and a historical backdrop the Kabi area was declared and revered as a sacred patch. The folklore dates back to time immemorial when the river Teesta and Rangeet supposedly originated following a

severe earthquake. Many lives were lost in the floods that ensued and forced the Lepchas to seek refuge on the higher reaches of the mountains. Those who survived the devastation initiated the tradition of worshipping each of the mountain tops where they had sought refuge. These peaks were worshipped as Saviour Mountains and Kabi is one among them. The prayers are to this date held on the full moon night in the 9th month of the Lepcha Lunar calendar. Lepchas still continue to pray their Saviour Mountains wherever they reside. The historical part of the folklore is that in the year 1268 AD Punu Habum was the Lepcha King and Thiekum Thek, an enlightened individual his patron, when Sikkim (Sukhim) was attacked through the Chumbi valley on the Tibet border by Khebrumsha. Punu Habum forced an accord with the invaders but Khebrumsha killed him by deceit. His claim to be the ruler of Sikkim raised suspicion and Thiekum Thek through tantrism discovered this deceit.



Khebrumsha confessed and was made to swear that he would follow the Lepcha tradition as the ruler. Thus was signed the Blood-Brotherhood Treaty at Kabi between the Lepchas and Bhutias (then Tibetans) in 1268 AD and the patch of forest was declared as sacred. Large stones as natural witnesses were placed (vernacularly known as Longchuk) in Kabi sacred grove during this celebration, which was known as Chyu-Slo-Nyeso. This tradition was suddenly discontinued during 1969-70 following some unpleasant happenings but was revived by the people after a short gap and is presently celebrated as Pang Labhsol throughout the state annually. All the ethnic communities including Nepalese join the celebrations while the entire Kabi-Longchuk sacred grove is worshipped/revered till date.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The grove, in Reserve Forest area, hosts varieties of tree species like Katus, Titey champ, Lekh Chilouney, Lal Chandan, Asare, Arupate, Sour, Rani Kawlo, Lapsi, Dhupi, Mauwa, Malagari, Chilouney etc.

The under growth hosts varieties of shrubs namely Argeli, Damai phal, Kukurdaine, Basak, etc., the ground is cover with herbs like Sisnu, Gagletto, Chipley, Uniu, Banmara, etc. Other than that the vegetation consists of epiphytes like Sanu Khari, Ruk Saro etc and the climbers like Kanchairna, Grandal, Charcharay Lahara etc.



Engelhardtia spicata



KALKANI DEVI MANDIR (TRIVENI)



BACKGROUND

The history of the temple dates back to the time when Sikkim was a Kingdom and Darjeeling was a part of Sikkim. The then Chogyal of Sikkim used to worship Mount Kanchenjunga here. It is also the sacred place for Lepchas.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The tree species ranging from Sal, Churi, Amla, Kaijal, Dudilo, Bakino, Khamari, etc. are found in this Reserve Forest area.

Shrubs present in the area are Kamlay, Bhatmasay, Sindure, etc. Herbs like Harkata, Phurkay, Bonso, etc. are found in the area.

LOCATION

Located just above the confluence of river Teesta and Rangeet and below the Melli-Jorthang road commonly known as Triveni in South Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 13'14.2" and Longitude E 88° 31'59.6" at an elevation of 260 meters.



KHECHOPERI LAKE



considered as one of the sacred lakes of Sikkim both by the Buddhist and the Hindus. It is reported that the lake is being formed by the scooping action of hanging glacier . It is said to represent the footprint of Guru Padmasambhava. There are two perennial and five seasonal inlets to the lake and one major out let.

VEGETATION

The forest around the lake is an evergreen temperate forest with species like Katus, Pipli, Phalat, Phatlay Katus, Lekh Chilouney in the upper story and Kharaney, Kawlo, Gobre, Bhalayo, Khanakpa, Tarsing in the second story,

The shrubs are dominated by Aiselu, Kagatey, Asare, Dhokray phool, Titepati ,Thotney, Kalamay, Argeli, and herbs are dominated by Lek Nakima, Bhale Chirata, Fern, Kalo banmara, Bojo, Kuro, Seto Elamay, Ghanday jhar, Titapati, Harkatta, Kalo Kibu, Bhalay Chirata, Chimphing, Chiplay, Pani Amala, Sisnu, Ningro, etc. Climbers like Charcharay Lahara, Ban Karela are present in the area.

LOCATION

Located 20 km from Pelling town in West Sikkim Situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 21'6.5" and Longitude E 88° 11'18.1" at an elevation of 1797 meters.



BACKGROUND

This lake is also known as the wish fulfilling lake. This unusually tranquil lake, surrounded by verdant forest is

LABRANG MONASTERY



LOCATION

Located 2 km (approx.) up hill from Phodong Monastery, North Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27 ° 25' 5.1" and Longitude E 88 ° 34' 47" at an elevation of 1953 meters.



BACKGROUND

This monastery is unique in the sense that unlike most monasteries which were razed by fires sometimes or the other, this one still retains the original structure. A pleasure for the eyes given its unique architecture, it is also one of the premier monasteries of Sikkim. The location is a wide and open meadow,

ideal for congregations. Dense forests surround the southern, western and northern sides of the compound. Gyalshe Rigzing Chempa commissioned Labrang Monastery in 1814, who then resided in Wangdiche, a palace in the vicinity. It adheres to the Nyingmapa School of Tibetan Buddhism as this was the prevalent school of monastery and inception. Its name literally means “the Lamas dwelling”. It was consecrated to the memory of Latsun Chembo of Kongpu of Tibet, who initiated and propagated this school of Buddhism in Sikkim. Just below the road between the Phodang and Labrang Monastery are the ruins of Tumlong, the third capital of Sikkim.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The top canopy of three acres of Gompa land is dominated by Dhupi tree. Other tree species found are Kharaney, Asare, Jhingni and Uttis.

The shrubs like Argeli, Aishelu, Titepati etc. and herbs namely Halhalay, Banso, Harkata, Dubo, Kuro, etc dominate the undergrowth .



LHARI - RINCHEN - NYING PHUG



LOCATION

Located inside Kanchenjunga National Park, 9km (approx) from Labdang village in West Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27°26'21.2" and Longitude E 88°16'39.3" at an elevation of 2835 meters.



BACKGROUND

This cave is considered to be the holiest of all the sacred caves and is associated with the 'God of Wrath'. This cave is

associated with the application of wrathful activities. It has three caves facing eastwards. The cave in the south has the self-arisen figures surrounded by a pantheon of longevity deities. The cave in the north houses wrathful deities in their fearsome costumes. The eastern cave has figures of eight fabulous horses of wealth. It is believed that going there will produce signs favourable to the growth and spiritual realization. To the west of this is located the goddess of wealth along with three goddesses of bountiful harvests. Further, to the West, is located the lord of death along with the assembled messengers of death. Below this is a triangular pit. It is believed that if the names of the powerful demonic clans are written down and thrown in the pit during the annual casting off of evil, the messengers of death will flee to their own abode. Nearby, are three stone charm boxes containing seven paper



scrolls inscribed with the names of the ten wrathful deities. Legend has it that if the wrathful mantras are recited three times when the powerful life threatening enemies of the earlier and later periods have assembled your prayer shall be answered with in seven days. The access to the caves are small, so one has to crawl to get inside the cave. Once inside, the caves are large enough to fit a average man in a standing position.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The grove consists of temperate forest consisting of tree species like Phatlay Katus, Balu chinday, Kapasi, Asare, Arupate, Phaledo, Lal Chandan, Kharaney etc. two variet of rhododendron are found in the grove namely *Rhododendron arboreum* and *Rhododendron falconeri*.

Under growth consists of shrubs like Thotnay, Seto Aiselu, etc. Some of the herbs present are Harkata, Primula, Buki, Buro Okhati, Bhaley Chirata, Das paisa jhar, Dubo etc.



Rhododendron arboreum



Buro Okhati



Ribes spp.



Rhododendron falconeri

NORBUGANG, YUKSOM, CORONATION THRONE



LOCATION

Located 200 meters from Yuksom town, West Sikkim, situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 22' 12.3" and Longitude E 88° 12' 59.8" at an elevation of 1801 meters.



BACKGROUND

In 1641, Lama Lutsum Chembo travelled from Tibet to Denjong (meaning hidden country) now known as Sikkim to propagate the Buddhist religion. He was then joined by two other lamas, Sempa Chembo and Rinzing Chembo. The trinity of the most revered Lamas belonged to the Kham district in Tibet with a mission to propagate Buddhism in Sikkim. They assembled from different directions at Norbugang, which later came to be known as Yuksom. The area in Rathong chu valley at Norbugang was considered as blessed by Guru Padma Sambhava (Guru Rim-bo-che). Since the vision of Saint Padmasambhava (Guru Rim-bo-che) had predicted the essentiality of a fourth person for the purpose, the Lamas went in pursuit of the fourth person, as the three lamas represented three directions of North, South and West in Tibet. According to legend, Guru Rinpoche, the 9th century Buddhist saint had also foretold the event that a Phuntsog from the east would be the next Chogyal of Sikkim. In 1642, the three lamas went in search of the chosen person in the eastern region. Near the present day Gangtok, they found a man churning milk. He offered them some refreshments and gave them shelter. So impressed were they by his deeds that they realised that he was a chosen one. They also identified Phunstsog Namgyal's ancestral royal links with Tibet and decided that he was the right person to become the temporal and religious head of the region, and then they brought him to Yuksom. They then crowned him at

Norbugang near Yuksom as the temporal and religious king of Sikkim, with the title of “Chogyal”. The crowning took place at Norbugang on a pedestal set in stones, in a pine-covered hill and he was anointed by sprinkling water from a sacred urn. At that time he was 38 years of age. He was a fifth generation descendant of Guru Tashi, a 13th century prince from the Mi-nyak House in Kham in Eastern Tibet.

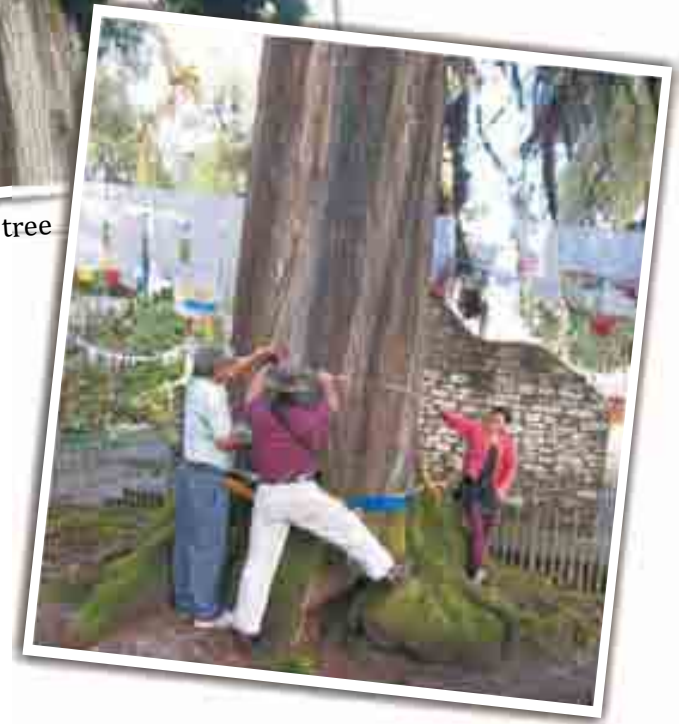
VEGETATION

The grove spreads over an area of approximately 1.73 acres and hosts many species of trees namely Peach, Bhakino, Cherry, Cupressus, Dudilo, Silver Oak, Uttis, Mauwa, Lali Guras, Patley Katus, Phusrey Champ, Nebharo, Singhaney, Okhar, Angeri, Kalo Siris, Jyambir, Rani Champ, Chilouney, Seto Kharaney, etc. A very large Cupressus tree having girth 4.97 meters and height 30.43 meters lies just adjacent to the coronation throne and as per the locals the tree is the only living witness to the coronation of first king of Sikkim.

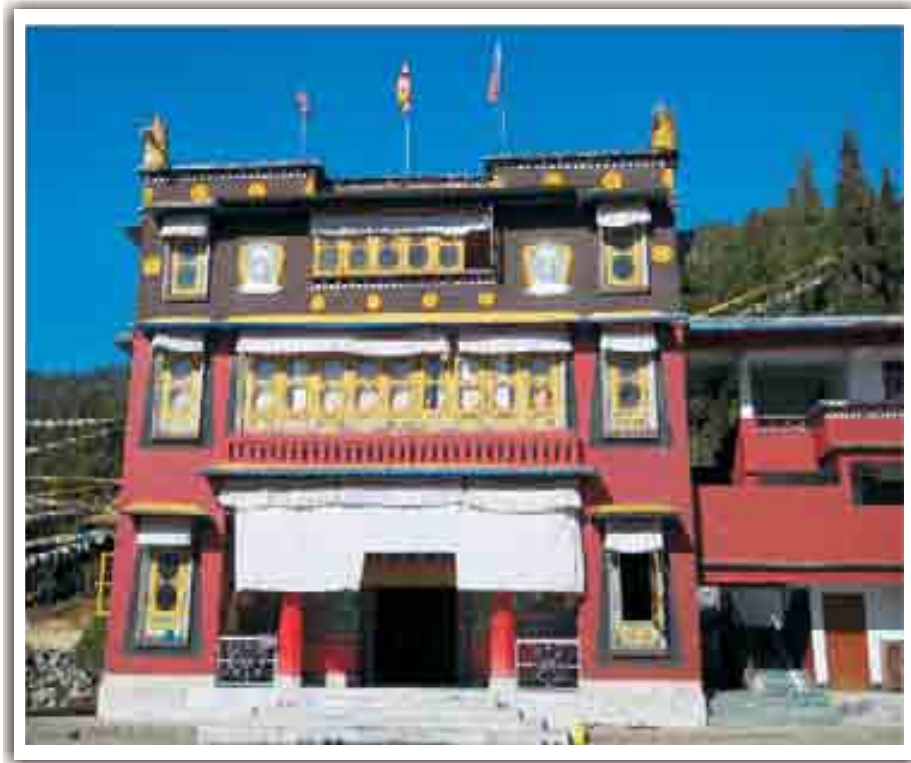
The under growth consist of varieties of herbs like Abijalo, Kalo Banso, Gogleto, Ratnawlo, Dubo, Elamay, Ganday Jhar, Manay, Ningro, Kataray Kuro etc.



Cupressus tree



NOR GUMPA

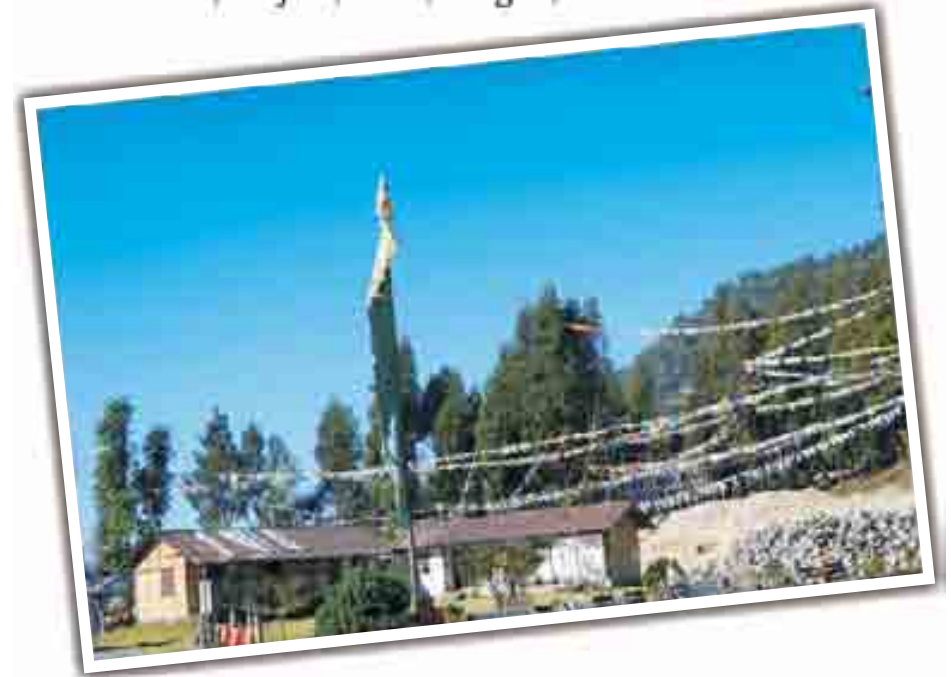


BACKGROUND

It adheres to the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism and was built in the year 1971 on the land gifted by the monarch of Sikkim, Chogyal Tashi Namgyal in the year 1961. Nor literary meaning seat of “Norsa Kunga Gyampu”.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The top canopy is fully dominated by Dhupi tree. The under growth consists of shrubs like Algeri, Ghurpis, Aiselu, Kalo Bilanue, Amliso, Titepati and herbs like Harkata, Bukey, Kalo Banmara, Abijalo, Kuro, Ningro, Dubo and Sisnu.



LOCATION

Located 8 km from Gangtok town in East Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 20'28.7" and Longitude E 88° 38' 39.9" at an elevation of 1847 meters.



NUB-DECHEN PHU



Cave entrance

LOCATION

Located 10 km (approx) from Yuksom town in West Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27°19'49.1" and Longitude E 88° 6'33.1" at an elevation of 3159 meters.



BACKGROUND

Nub-Dechen Phu, also known as the 'Cave of Great Happiness', is located near Dzungri, deemed as one of the eminent trekking destinations of Sikkim. This holy abode of Guru Padmasambhava is believed to be associated with the 'God of Infinite Light'. It is believed that this cave, which is as big as a three storied building, contains sacred images representing the body, speech and mind, ritual objects, and complete sutras and tantras translated in Tibet. Legend has it that treasured stores that could feed almost half the population of the world are also hidden here. Just by going to this cave one can acquire 'Supreme Higher Attainment'. At the main cave are located two lesser caves of 'Supreme Higher Attainments' and three lesser caves of 'Common Attainments'. Besides these there are numerous large and small caves where enlightenment has been attained.



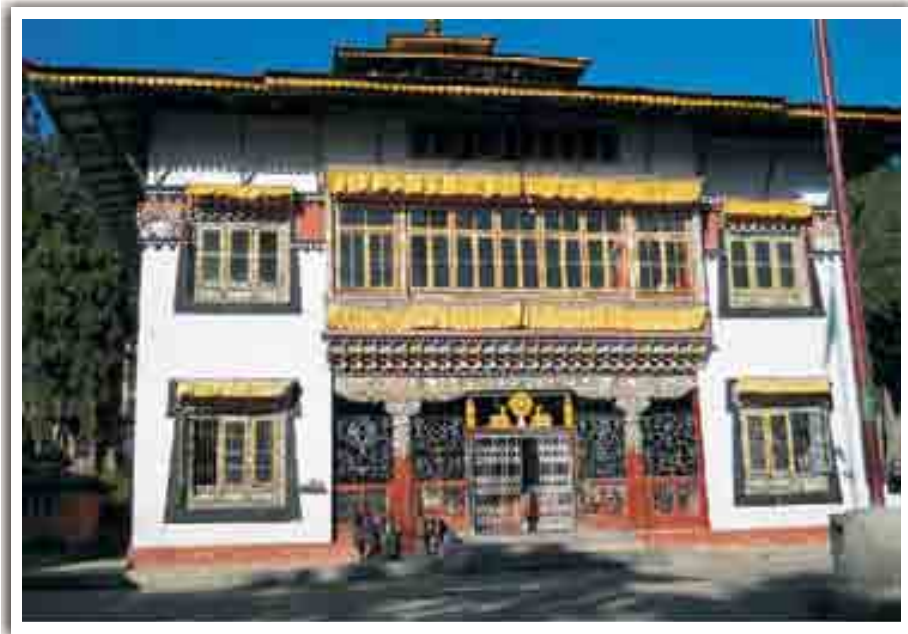
VEGETATION

Located at high elevation with steep rocky slope the area is not very conducive to growth of trees but still few pole crops of mainly Kharaney are present with sporadic presence of Sour and Rhododendron species like *Rhododendron falconeri* & *Rhododendron arboreum*.

Under growth consist of shrubs like *Vaccinium*, Aiselu, Asare, Algeri, Titepati etc. and herbs namely Primula, Phakanbeth, Chipley, Thotnay, Buki etc. are present in the grove area.



PHENSONG MONASTERY



LOCATION

Located 3km (approx.) from the Phensong village in North Sikkim, situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 25'13.5" and Longitude E 88° 36'36.2" at an elevation of 1593 meters.



BACKGROUND

This monastery in North Sikkim was built in 1840 during the time of Jigme Pawo. Belonging to the Nyingmapa order, this monastery stands testimony to the dedication of its monks who

reconstructed the monastery within a year after it was burnt down in 1947. There are around 300 monks under the monastery and is famous for the main annual Chaam (monk dance) performed on the 28th & 29th days of the tenth month of the Tibetan Calendar which normally corresponds to the month of December. Its name translates as "The excellent Banner" or "Good Bliss".

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The grove of 5 acres in and around Gumpa land is mainly dominated by Dhupi trees in the top canopy, other tree species found in the groves are Chilouney, Okhar, Tite Champ and Phusrey Champ.

Shrubs like Dhokrey Phul, Titepati, Kamley, Amliso, Ghurpis etc. are present in the grove. Halhalay, Ningro, Dubo, Kaney, Harkata, Abijalo, Kalo Banso etc are some of the herbs species present in the area.



PHUR CHACHU



BACKGROUND

The grove is known for its hot spring which is said to have therapeutic values to cure skin diseases. Every year pilgrims from as far as Nepal and Bhutan come to take dip in this hot spring.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The Grove hosts numerous tree species like Bhogatay, Taki phool, Siris, Kimbu, Gokul, Ritha, Panisaj, Payung, Bakino, Lampatey, Guay Champ, Lali etc.

Shrubs like Titepati, Dhokrey, Kharatey Jha, etc. and herbs like Kibu, Seto Elamay, Kuro, Kalo Elamay are found in the area.



LOCATION

Phur chachu is located along the Legshep Road in South Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 14'55" and Longitude E 88°18'8.7" at an elevation of 480 meters.



RANI DHUNGA



the auspicious day of Ramnavami local people come here and offer prayers .

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

Tree species like Kharaney, Angeri, Rani Champ, Rani Kawlo, Jhing, Bantey, Phaledo, Dudilo, Gogay Champ , Lali Guras are present in the grove area, few large trees of Dhupi are also present of which two trees tower more than 20 meters in height and have girth more than 3 meters.

Shurbs like Rani Thotnay, Asare, Aiselu, Argeli, Titepati, etc. and herbs like Chimphing, Bhaley Chirata, etc. dominate the ground cover.

LOCATION

Located in West Sikkim, situated approximately at Longitude E88° 10'26.9" and Latitude N 27° 17'26.9" at an elevation of 2478 meters.



BACKGGROUND

There is a foot print on the large stone which is believed to be of Lord Rama. On



Cryptomeria Japonica

ROLEP BOUDHA



present, which is worshipped by the local community there. Both Hindu and Buddhist make offering like milk and fruits and deity of both communities is present in the grove. A small water hole on the top of the large stone is believed to have pure and holy water. In 1957 the last monarch of Sikkim is said to have visited the place. It is believed that if a childless couple comes here and offers prayer and offering to the local deity, they will be blessed with a child.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The 2.4 acre Reserve Forest area of the grove, consist of species like Tooni, Kabra, Nevara, Kaula, Malata, Gogun etc.

The under cover is fairly thick with species of shrubs like Kalo Kibu, Asare, Thotnay etc. and herbs namely Harkata, Sisnu, Ningro, Banso etc.

LOCATION

Located 5km from Rolep Village in East Sikkim situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 17'11.5" and Longitude E 88°43'34.1" at an elevation of 1504 meters.



BACKGROUND

The grove is said to be 150 years old and was first discovered by hunters. A foot print of a tiger on a stone is still



The Holy water hole



Thick under growth

ROLU DEVI THAN



LOCATION

Located on Melli - Jorethang road in South Sikkim situated approximately at Longitude N 27°5'49" and Latitude E 88° 23'14.7" at an elevation of 284 meters.



HISTORICAL

The history of the grove dates back to the time before the existence of the Melli- Jorethang road. The land was a large paddy field which was completely damaged and fragmented by the historical flood of 1968, after the flood the landscape was completely transformed. The huge boulders in combination with Ficus tree gave the area the divine impression. The legend had it

that area was the resting place for tiger who used to roar in the night and had to be offered animals like goat and pigeon to please him and prevent him from lifting the domesticated animals. But now no such animal sacrifices are made. People now offer only fruits and milk.

VEGETATION OF THE GROVE

The grove area hosts tree species like Mango, Ambak, Bhar, Pipal, Kabra, Chattiwan, Totola, Dab dabe, Gulmohar, Lampatay, Silver Oak etc.

The ground cover consists of shrubs like Kharaney, Kharato Jhar, Kamley, Sindure etc. and herbs like Kalo Elamay, Dubo, Siru, Harkata, Tulsi, Gandhay Jhar etc. The climbers like Pani Lahara, Amil pate, Money plant, etc. are present in the area.



RUMTEK OLD MONASTERY



BACKGROUND

This monastery is almost 300 years old, originally built by the fourth Chogyal under the guidance of the ninth Karmapa . It was destroyed by fire and had to be reconstructed to the present state. The site possesses many auspicious qualities and is believed to be surrounded by the most favorable attributes, for example, flowing streams, mountains behind, a snow range in front, and a river below. His Holiness late 16th Gyalwa Karmapa lived in this monastery till the completion of the Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center .

VEGETATION

The vegetation of the Gumpa land is mainly dominated by Dhupi tree. Other tree species found here are Bangey, Kutmero, Lal Chandan and Khanakpa.

Under growth of this grove consists of shrubs like Basak, Bilanue, Titepati, Angeri etc, and herbs like Kuro, Halhalay, Abijalo, Harkata, Banmara etc.

LOCATION

Located 2 km from the Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center (New monastery), situated approximately at Latitude N 27° 22' 12.3" and Longitude E 88° 12' 59.8" at an elevation of 1609 meters.



TARKU TANAK KALIMANDIR



and only fruits and flowers are offered to the god. Recently a concrete structure has come up in the area.

VEGETATION

The top canopy of the grove is dominated by tree species like Lampatey, Seto Siris, Mango, Cherry, and Lasuney.

Under growth consists of herbs like Beth lauri, Maney, Chabo, etc. and shrubs like kamley etc.

LOCATION

Located in Temi Tarku, South Sikkim, situated approximately at Latitude N 27°14'40.2" and Longitude E 88° 26'16.1" at an altitude of 946 meters.



BACKGROUND

Tarku Tanak Kalimandir was first discovered by hunters who used to present offering. Slowly the people of the vicinity started presenting offering and prayers, In the past sacrifice of live animals were made but now all such practices have stopped



LOCAL AND BOTANICAL NAMES OF FLORA

Annexure-I

Local Name	Botanical Name	Local Name	Botanical Name	Local Name	Botanical Name
Amala	<i>Emblica officinalis</i>	Gogay Champ	<i>Magnolia campebelli</i>	Mauwa	<i>Engelhardtia acerifolia</i>
Ambak	<i>Psidium guajava</i>	Gogleto	<i>Elastostema spp.</i>	Musre/Patle Katus	<i>Castanopsis tribuloides</i>
Angeri	<i>Andromeda elliptica</i>	Gogun	<i>Saurauia grimthii</i>	Nebara	<i>Ficus spp.</i>
Argeli	<i>Daphne cannabina</i>	Guenyhlo	<i>Callicarpa arborea</i>	Okhar	<i>Juglans regia</i>
Arkaulo	<i>Quercus spicata</i>	Gulmohar	<i>Delonix regia</i>	Paiyung	<i>Prunus cerasoides</i>
Arupate	<i>Prunus nepaulensis</i>	Jhingni	<i>Eurya japonica</i>	Pakha Saj	<i>Terminalia crenulata</i>
Asare	<i>Viburnum spp.</i>	Kaijal	<i>Bischofia javanica</i>	Panisaj	<i>Terminalia myriocarpa</i>
Aiselu	<i>Rubus spp.</i>	Kalamay	<i>Boehmeria platyphylla</i>	Patle Katus	<i>Quercus lanceaefolia</i>
Bajrant/Buk	<i>Quercus lamellosa</i>	Kali kath	<i>Sarcosperma arboreum</i>	Patpate/Champ	<i>Magnolia pterocarpa</i>
Bakyono	<i>Melia azedarach</i>	Kangya Phul	<i>Wendlandia puberula</i>	Phalant	<i>Quercus lineata</i>
Balu Chinday	<i>Aesculus punduana</i>	Kapase	<i>Acer campbelli</i>	Phaledo	<i>Erythrina arborescens</i>
Bangey	<i>Barchemia floribunda</i>	Karhur Siris	<i>Albizza odoratissima</i>	Phusre/Guay Champ	<i>Michelia lanuginosa</i>
Banso	<i>Digitaria spp.</i>	Katus	<i>Castanopsis hystrix</i>	Pipli	<i>Bucklandia populnea</i>
Barr	<i>Ficus bengalensis</i>	Kawla	<i>Machilus edulis</i>	Rani/ Seto Chanp	<i>Michelia excelsa</i>
Basak	<i>Dichroa febrifuga</i>	Khanakpa	<i>Evodia fraxinifolia</i>	Ratnawlo	<i>Persicaria spp.</i>
Bepari	<i>Ostodes paniculatus</i>	Kharaney	<i>Symplocos theifolia</i>	Sal	<i>Shorea robusta</i>
Bhadrase	<i>Elaeocarpus lanceaefolius</i>	Kholme	<i>Symplocos spicata</i>	Saur	<i>Betula alnoides</i>
Bhalayo	<i>Rhus insignis</i>	Kimbu	<i>Morus laevigata</i>	Seto Kawla	<i>Machilus kurzii</i>
Bhogotay	<i>Citrus spp.</i>	Kukurdainey	<i>Smilax sp</i>	Silver Oak	<i>Grewelia robusta</i>
Bilanue	<i>Maesa chisia</i>	Kutmero	<i>Litsaea polyantha</i>	Simal	<i>Bombax malabaricum</i>
Bohori	<i>Ehretia wallichiana</i>	Lal Chandan	<i>Daphniphyllum himalayense</i>	Sindure	<i>Mallotus philippinensis</i>
Chakrasey	<i>Chukrasia tabularis</i>	Lali	<i>Amoora wallichii</i>	Sinkoli	<i>Cinnamomum obtusifolium</i>
Chatiwan	<i>Alstonia scholaris</i>	Lali Gurans	<i>Rhododendron arboretum</i>	Siris Kalo	<i>Albizza lebbeck</i>
Chilouney	<i>Schima wallichii</i>	Lali Kawlo	<i>Machilus spp.</i>	Siris Rato	<i>Albizzia marginata</i>
Chimal	<i>Rhododendron spp.</i>	Lampatay	<i>Duabanga sonneratioides</i>	Siris Seto	<i>Albizzia procera</i>
Chindey	<i>Pentapanax leschenaultii</i>	Lankhuri	<i>Fraxinus paxiana</i>	Tarsing	<i>Beilschmiedia sikkimensis</i>
Chirata	<i>Swertia chirata</i>	Lapsi	<i>Spondias axillaris</i>	Thotney	<i>Aconogonom spp.</i>
Cupressus	<i>Cupressus spp.</i>	Lasuney	<i>Akabguyn spp</i>	Titapatey	<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>
Dabdabe	<i>Gruga gamblei</i>	Lek Kharaney	<i>Symplocos phyllocalyx</i>	Tite Champ	<i>Michelia cathcartii</i>
Dhupi	<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i>	Lekh Chilouney	<i>Nyssa javanica</i>	Tooni	<i>Cedrela toona</i>
Dubo	<i>Cyanodon spp.</i>	Malagari	<i>Cinnamomum cecidodaphne</i>	Totala	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i>
Dudilo	<i>Ficus nemoralis</i>	Malata	<i>Mallotus nepalensis</i>	Uniue	<i>Angiopteris evecta</i>
Elamay	<i>Ageratum spp.</i>	Manay	<i>Alocasia spp.</i>	Uttis	<i>Alnus nepalensis</i>
Gayo	<i>Bridelia verrucosa</i>	Mango/Anp	<i>Mangifera indica</i>		
Ghurpis	<i>Leucosceptrum canum</i>				
Gobra	<i>Edrinocarpus dasycarpus</i>				

REFERENCES

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Showcasing Sikkim Rhododendrons - IRF 2010 Experience. - Dechen Lachungpa (Chuba)

DISCLAIMER

All the Latitudes ,Longitudes and elevation of the Groves are taken using handheld GPS which may have the inherent errors depending upon signal strength, topography satellite geometry etc. All the information present are combination of narration and information collected from locals and other sources .



FOREST, ENVIRONMENT & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT
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